

REMARKS

Claims 4-7 remain in the present application. Independent claims 4 and 6 have been amended.

In the Office Action dated September 8, 2004, the Examiner rejected, in particular, independent claim 4 of the present application under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Thompson (U.S. Patent No. 6,249,510). In addition, the Examiner rejected, in particular, independent claim 6 of the present application under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Liu (U.S. Patent No. 5,953,141). For the following reasons, Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections and respectfully request the withdrawal thereof.

First of all, Applicants wish to point out that independent claims 4 and 6 of the present application have been amended so as to clarify that "the add and drop functions are arranged on two separate boards."

Applicants respectfully submit that neither the Thompson nor Liu references (whether directed to a bi-directional ring network or a uni-directional ring network) teach or suggest a network node wherein the add and drop functions are respectively arranged on two separate boards. Indeed, only by separating the drop function (circulator and four gratings) and the add function (1:2 coupler) on two different boards, can any "single point of failure" be prevented in the case of 1:1 protection. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that both the Thompson and Liu references fail to anticipate that which is claimed by independent claims 4 and 6, respectively.

In light of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 4 and 6 of the present application, as amended, as well as claims 5 and 7 which respectfully depend therefrom, are both novel and non-obvious over the art of record. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

It is further acknowledged that a three month extension of time of \$1020.00 is due in connection with this response at this time. However, if any additional fees are due in connection with this application as a whole, the Examiner is authorized to deduct said fees from Deposit Account No.: 02-1818. If such a deduction is made, please indicate the attorney docket number (0112740-261) on the account statement.

Respectfully submitted,

BELL, BOYD & LLOYD LLC

BY 

William E. Vaughan

Reg. No. 39,056

P.O. Box 1135

Chicago, Illinois 60690-1135

Phone: (312) 807-4292

Dated: March 8, 2005